

"The Thin Place" stages some genuine thrills in Santa Cruz

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Tara McMilan [L] as Linda the Psychic and Jennifer Galvin as Hilda [r], rehearsing a scene from "The Thin Place."

[The Actors' Theatre](#) in downtown Santa Cruz is a small box of a theater, with less than a dozen rows of seats and a small stage set with two big chairs and a lamp. It creates an intimate space for the audience and the actors — the perfect setting for "The Thin Place," a play that feels a bit like a séance between the audience and the actors.



Miguel Reyna, the play's director, says the audience seems to respond to the play as if they had just communicated with the dead themselves.

"[You see] this expression of them being absolutely thrilled and not knowing what they just saw," he said. "Which makes me really happy as a director and someone who puts on horror pieces like this."

"The Thin Place" Director Miguel Reyna inside the Actors' Theatre in Santa Cruz.

"The thin place" describes a fragile boundary between our world and the world of the dead. It's also about two people: Linda, a psychic from London who communicates with the dead and Hilda, a woman who is looking to connect with a loved one from beyond.



Actor Jennifer Galvin backstage at the Actor's Theatre.

Actress Jennifer Galvin plays Hilda, who tries to communicate with her deceased Grandmother. The scenes move between the present-day séance and memories from Hilda's past. Galvin says her character is seeking questions about events that happened earlier in her life.

"She [Hilda] seeks out the guidance and help of Linda, as she's on her quest to get answers to these questions she has."

Actress Tara McMilan plays Linda, the medium who can communicate with the dead. McMilan says Linda is a bit of a colorful character.

"She [Linda] loves to tell stories, loves to entertain and has that presence about her. She claims to access the thin place, this place of energy between this world and the other worlds that may be," McMilan said. "And that means different things to different people."

In Hilda's case, that means taking the audience with her through some scary experiences as she confronts her past to become more confident in who she is now. Director Miguel Reyna says that those who have dared to see the play so far have had a frighteningly good time.

"We had a standing ovation on opening night. Usually it's later in the run that that happens," he said. "I think [it was] because of the fact that we entertained and thrilled the audience."



Actor Tara McMillan backstage at the Actor's Theatre in Santa Cruz. McMillan plays Linda the medium.

And McMillan, who plays Linda the psychic, says the play works on many levels. "Yes, it's spooky. Yes it's fun. It's also political and it's also philosophical. So there are many layers just like the worlds beyond this one," she said.



The Actors' Theatre in Santa Cruz, decorated with spooky masks and webbed fabric for the staging of "The Thin Place"

"The Thin Place" is staging its final [performances](#) in the Actor's Theatre in Santa Cruz this Thursday through Saturday at 8 p.m., with a Sunday matinee at 2 p.m. There will also be a final special performance on Halloween night at 8 p.m.